DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 451 332 CE 081 278

AUTHOR	Simmons, Alison, Ed.
TITLE	Adventures in Assessment: Learner-Centered Approaches to Assessment and Evaluation in Adult Literacy, 2000. Volume 12: Experiences with Standards-Based Reform.
INSTITUTION	System for Adult Basic Education Support, Boston, MA.
SPONS AGENCY	World Education, Inc., Boston, MA.
PUB DATE	2000-00-00
NOTE	75p.; Published annually. For Volumes 1-11, see ED 448 264.
AVAILABLE FROM	SABES/World Education, 44 Farnsworth Street, Boston, MA 02210-1211 ($10). Tel: 617-482-9485; Fax: 617-482-0617; Web site: http://www.sabes.org.
PUB TYPE	Collected Works - Serials (022)
JOURNAL CIT	Adventures in Assessment; v12 Win 2000
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Adult Basic Education; *Adult Literacy; Curriculum Development; Educational Assessment; Educational Improvement; Educational Planning; *English (Second Language); *Evaluation Methods; Inservice Teacher Education; *Literacy Education; National Standards; Second Language Instruction; State Standards; *Student Evaluation; Teacher Evaluation; *Teaching Methods; Theory Practice Relationship
IDENTIFIERS	Test of Adult Basic Education

ABSTRACT

In this volume of "Adventures in Assessment," an annual literacy education journal, teachers and practitioners write about their experiences with standards-based reform initiatives at the state and national levels. The following seven articles are included: "What Makes a Good Teacher?" (Marie F. Hassett); "Successful Supervision: Three Perspectives" (Caroline Gear, Rebecca Shiffron, and Steve Kurtz); "A Curriculum Project" (Sherry Spaulding); "A Performance Framework for Teaching and Learning with the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Content Standards" (Peggy McGuire); "Connecting the ESOL (English as a Second Language) Framework to Actual Practice" (Roseann Ritter); "Learning from Experience: To TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) or Not to TABE One Agency's Options" (Bernie Driscoll); and "Learning and Change: A Phase Two North Carolina ESOL Framework Inquiry Project" (Beth Brockman). (KC)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

L Wolfrab

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

ED 451 332

winter

assessment advantage

Learner-centered approaches to assessment and

volume

CE081278

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

2

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

☑ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

SABES
System for Adult Basic Education Support

SABES is the System for Adult Basic Education Support, a comprehensive training and technical assistance initiative for adult literacy educators and programs. Its goal is to strengthen and enhance literacy services and thus to enable adult learners to attain literacy skills.

SABES accomplishes this goal through staff and program development workshops, consultation, mini-courses, mentoring and peer coaching, and other training activities provided by five Regional Support Centers located at community colleges throughout Massachusetts. SABES also offers a 15-hour Orientation that introduces new staff to adult education theory and practice and enables them to build support networks. Visit us at our website: www.sabes.org

SABES also maintains an adult literacy Clearinghouse to collect, evaluate, and disseminate ABE materials, curricula, methodologies, and program models, and encourages the development and use of practitioner and learner-generated materials. Each of the five SABES Regional Support Centers similarly offers program support and a lending library. SABES maintains an Adult Literacy Hotline, a statewide referral service which responds to calls from new learners and volunteers. The Hotline number is 1-800-447-8844.

The SABES Central Resource Center, a program of World Education, publishes a statewide quarterly newsletter, "Bright Ideas," and journals on topics of interest to adult literacy professionals, such as this volume of "Adventures in Assessment."

*The first three volumes of "Adventures in Assessment" present a comprehensive view of the state of practice in Massachusetts through articles written by adult literacy practitioners. Volume 1, **Getting Started**, includes start-up and intake activities; Volume 2, **Ongoing**, shares tools for ongoing assessment as part of the learning process; Volume 3, **Looking Back, Starting Again**, focuses on tools and procedures used at the end of a cycle or term, including self, class, and group evaluation by both teachers and learners. Volume 4 covered a range of interests, and Volume 5, **The Tale of the Tools** is dedicated to reflecting on Component 3 tools of alternative assessment. Volume 6, **Responding to the Dream Conference**, is dedicated to responses to Volumes 1-5. Volume 7, **The Partnership Project**, highlighted writings from a mentoring project for practioners interested in learning about participatory assessment. Volumes 8-12 cover a range of topics, including education reform, workplace education, learner involvement in assessment, etc.*

We'd like to see your contribution. If you would like to submit an article for our Winter 2001 issue, contact Editor Alison Simmons.

Opinions expressed in "Adventures in Assessment" are those of the authors and not necessarily the opinions of SABES or its funders.

Permission is granted to reproduce portions of this journal; we request, however, appropriate credit be given to the author and to Adventures in Assessment.

***Adventures in Assessment** is free to DOE-funded Massachusetts programs; out-of-state requests will be charged a nominal fee. Please write to, or call:*

Alison Simmons
World Education
44 Farnsworth Street
Boston, MA 02210-1211
617-482-9485
asimmons@worlded.org

winter 2000

adventures IN assessment

Learner-centered approaches to assessment and evaluation in adult literacy

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

volume twelve

Editor: *Alison Simmons* ***Assistant Editor:*** *Rick Schwartz* ***Cover Design:*** *Marina Blanter*

Volume
12 • 4

Introduction

Volume 12: Experiences with Standards-Based Reform

by
Alison Simmons

Editor
SABES Central
Resource Center/
World Education

In this volume of *Adventures in Assessment*, teachers and practitioners write about their experiences with standards-based reform initiatives at both the state and national levels. In the process of translating these initiatives into everyday practice, they have come to a better understanding of their students, curricula and assessment, and the importance of getting students and teachers involved in identifying what it is they need/want to know and for what purpose and context.

Sherry Spaulding and **Roseann Ritter** were part of the implementation phase of the Massachusetts ESOL frameworks project. They write about their involvement in the project and how it helped them better understand the role of standards in developing curriculum and the importance of developing ways to understand what students know, and want and need to know.

Beth Brockman participated in Phase Two of her state's framework initiative in North Carolina. In her look at the draft frameworks developed by practitioners in her state, she focuses on the non-language outcomes of her students and how these could fit into a framework for assessment. For more information about the North Carolina ESOL Frameworks contact Literacy South, (919) 682-8108.

At the national level, **Peggy McGuire**, assessment coordinator for Equipped for the Future (EFF), leads us through EFF's assessment framework. She discusses the development and the implementation of the framework and future activities. She helps us see how it is linked closely to standards and how assessment is more than just one dimension, one standard and one tool. Their approach can help us see how this initiative can connect to our own state initiatives as well as our own classroom practice. For more information on EFF, check out http://www.nifl.gov/eff, or call 1-877-433-7827.

In *What Makes a Good Teacher?* **Marie Hassett** identifies eight characteristics of a good teacher. She hopes these will be helpful as we look at and reflect on our own teaching and connection to our students.

Caroline Gear, **Rebecca Shiffren** and **Steve Kurtz** write about the importance of empowering teachers to problem solve about classroom issues. They introduce a tool that was developed at the Center for Teacher Education at The School for International Training in Brattleboro, Vermont . This tool helped them establish a way to give and receive feedback that involved the teacher more in the process.

In *Learning from Experience*, **Bernie Driscoll** from the Taunton Adult Learning Center shares her math assessment process and tool and talks about the difficulty students may have when faced with an assessment tool that is too daunting.

Many teachers are looking at standards-based assessment and what it means for them and their classrooms. As the initiatives grow in use, it would be interesting

to hear what other teachers are doing to translate these initiatives into practice. What does it mean to develop assessment tools, to write assessment criteria? To develop performance standards? How are we using the EFF standards in our classrooms? How are we using the other frameworks to better understand what it is our students know, need to know and be able to do?

As always we welcome your thoughts and ideas. If you would like to submit an article or have comments, please feel free to contact me at asimmons@worlded.org.

Volume
12 • 7

Contents

Introduction: Volume 12: Experiences with Standards-Based Reform 4
Alison Simmons, Editor, Adventures in Assessment, SABES Central Resource Center, World Education, Boston, MA

What Makes A Good Teacher? 9
Marie F. Hassett, Ph.D., Bricolage, Inc., Jamaica Plain, MA

Successful Supervision: Three Perspectives 13
Caroline Gear, International Language Institute, Northampton, MA
Rebecca Shiffron, Steve Kurtz, Lutheran Social Services, Springfield, MA

A Curriculum Project 18
Sherry Spaulding, International Institute of Boston, Boston, MA

A Performance Framework for Teaching and Learning with the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Content Standards 28
Peggy McGuire, EFF Assessment Coordinator, Philadelphia, PA

Connecting the ESOL Framework to Actual Practice 44
Roseann Ritter, North Andover, MA

Learning from Experience
To TABE or Not to TABE: One Agency's Options 56
Bernie Driscoll, Taunton Adult Literacy Center, Taunton, MA

Learning and Change: A Phase Two North Carolina ESOL Framework Inquiry Project 60
Beth Brockman, Durham, NC

Volume
12 • 9

What Makes A Good Teacher?

by
Marie F. Hassett,
Ph.D.

Bricolage, Inc.
Jamaica Plain, MA

I have been teaching for the last ten years. During that time, I have worked in public schools, universities, extracurricular programs for K-12, adult basic literacy, and adult enrichment classes. My youngest student was a 6 year-old budding actress in a town-sponsored arts enrichment program for elementary students; my oldest, a Jamaican immigrant, a grandmother beginning at the age of 63 to learn how to read. I've taught honors students in a college humanities program, and severely handicapped youth in a public high school.

The breadth of my experience has enriched my teaching life, but left me without a luxury some of my colleagues enjoy—the sense, as I walk into a new class, for a new term, that I know what my students will need, and how best to share it with them. This is not to say that I've been tossed blind into the classroom. In most cases, I've had enough prep time to gather what seem like appropriate materials, and find out something about the students I'll be working with. What I have not had is the critical mass of sameness that accrues to the teacher who stays in the same setting, at the same level, for many years in a row. I cannot assume that what worked last semester will work this time.

As a result of my ever-changing context, I've spent a lot of time thinking about the craft and practice of teaching, as separate from course content, age of students, size of class, or institutional setting. Everywhere I go, I meet exemplary teachers, and I've been interested in figuring out what makes them so good. What I've discovered is the inherent sameness of good teachers, regardless of the substantial differences between them in terms of style, personality, goals, and pattern of interaction with students. I would go so far as to say that good teachers, in all settings and at all levels, have more in common with each other than any of them may have with their colleagues in comparable positions.

In order to understand the bold statement above, try the following exercise. Sit back, close your eyes, and bring to mind the three best teachers you ever had. Try to remember what they were like—how they looked, talked and acted, what their classrooms and/or offices were like, how they made you feel as their student. When you're satisfied that you've gotten a good picture of who these people were, open your eyes, and consider the words of educator and philosopher Parker Palmer:

> *Good teaching isn't about technique. I've asked students around the country to describe their good teachers to me. Some of them describe people who lecture all the time, some of them describe people who do little other than facilitate group process, and others describe everything in between. But all of them describe people who have some sort of connective capacity, who connect themselves to their students, their students to each other, and everyone to the subject being studied.* (1999, p. 27)

If you want your students to become better, more involved readers, you allow time for reading and provide access to books.

Do you recognize your best teachers in this description? When we talk about the quality of someone's teaching, we address issues of technique, content, and presentation. But we all know people who have tremendous knowledge but fail to communicate it: people who have, on paper, a great lesson, but whose students are bored or frustrated. When we're being honest, we admit that good teaching often has less to do with our knowledge and skills than with our attitude towards our students, our subject, and our work.

The rest of this article will address some of the characteristics that good teachers exhibit. It is not meant to be all encompassing or definitive; many excellent teachers may possess only some of these traits, and consider others not mentioned to be just as valuable. The characteristics detailed here may be viewed simply as a selection of tools that allow teachers to create and sustain connectivity in their classrooms.

Good teachers:

- **have a *sense of purpose*;**
- **have *expectations of success* for all students;**
- **tolerate *ambiguity*;**
- **demonstrate a *willingness to adapt and change* to meet student needs;**
- **are comfortable with *not knowing*;**
- ***reflect* on their work;**
- **learn from a *variety of models*;**
- ***enjoy* their work and their students.**

GOOD TEACHERS HAVE A SENSE OF PURPOSE.

You can't be good in a generic sense; you have to be good for something. As a teacher, this means that you know what your students expect, and you make plans to meet those expectations. You, too, have expectations about what happens in your classroom, based on the goals you're trying to achieve. If you want to prepare your students for employment, you expect punctuality and good attendance. If you teach a GED class, you spend time explaining the format of the test and helping students to improve their test-taking skills. And if you want your students to become better, more involved readers, you allow time for reading and provide access to books.

GOOD TEACHERS HAVE EXPECTATIONS OF SUCCESS FOR ALL STUDENTS.

This is the great paradox of teaching. If we base our self-evaluation purely on the success of our students, we'll be disappointed. At all levels, but especially in adult education, there are simply too many factors in students' lives for a teacher to be able to guarantee success to all. At the same time, if we give up on our students, adopting a fatalistic, "it's out of my hands" attitude, students will sense our lack of commitment and tune out. The happy medium can be achieved with a simple question: Did I do everything that I could in this class, this time, to meet the needs of all my students, assuming that complete success was possible? As long as you can answer in the affirmative, you're creating a climate for success.

GOOD TEACHERS KNOW HOW TO LIVE WITH AMBIGUITY.

One of the greatest challenges of teaching stems from the lack of immediate, accurate feedback. The student who walks out of your classroom tonight shaking his head and muttering under his breath about alge-

bra may burst into class tomorrow proclaiming his triumph over math, and thanking you for the previous lesson. There is no way to predict precisely what the long-term results of our work will be. But if we have a sense of purpose informing our choice of strategies and materials, and we try to cultivate expectations of success for all our students, we will be less likely to dwell on that unpredictability, choosing instead to focus on what we can control, and trusting that thoughtful preparation makes good outcomes more likely than bad ones.

GOOD TEACHERS ADAPT AND CHANGE TO MEET STUDENT NEEDS.

Can we really claim to have taught a class in geography if no one learned any of the concepts in the lesson from our presentation? If none of our students ever pick up a book outside of the classroom, have we really taught them to be better readers? We don't always think about these issues, but they are at the heart of effective teaching. A great lesson plan and a great lesson are two entirely different things; it's nice when one follows the other, but we all know that it doesn't always work out that way. We teach so that students will learn, and when learning doesn't happen, we need to be willing to devise new strategies, think in new ways, and generally do anything possible to revive the learning process. It's wonderful to have a good methodology, but it's better to have students engaged in good learning.

GOOD TEACHERS ARE REFLECTIVE.

This may be the only infallible, absolute characteristic of all good teachers, because without it, none of the other traits we've discussed can fully mature. Good teachers routinely think about and reflect on their classes, their students, their methods, and their materials. They compare and contrast, draw parallels and distinctions, review, remove and restore. Failing to observe what happens in our classes on a daily basis disconnects us from the teaching and learning process, because it's impossible to create connectivity if you've disconnected yourself.

GOOD TEACHERS ARE COMFORTABLE WITH NOT KNOWING.

If we reflect honestly and thoughtfully on what happens in our classes, we will often find dilemmas we cannot immediately resolve, questions we cannot answer. In his *Letters to a Young Poet*, Rainer Maria Rilke suggests that his correspondent, "try to love *the questions themselves* as if they were locked rooms or books written in a very foreign language.... Live the questions now. Perhaps then, someday far in the future, you will gradually, without even noticing it, live your way into the answer" (1986, pp. 34-35). In the same way, our teaching benefits if we can live for a little while with a question, think and observe, and let an answer develop in response to the specific situation we face.

If we reflect honestly and thoughtfully on what happens in our classes, we will often find dilemmas we cannot immediately resolve.

GOOD TEACHERS HAD GOOD ROLE MODELS.

Think back again to your three best teachers. How has your own teaching been shaped by their practices, consciously or unconsciously? Think also of the worst teacher you ever had. Are there things you absolutely will not do because you remember how devastating they were to you or your classmates? We learn to teach gradually, and absorb ideas and practices from a variety of sources. How many movies have you seen that include a teacher as a character, and how might those films have con-

tributed to your practice? We are not always aware of the influences on our teaching, good and bad; reflecting on the different models of teaching we've acquired, and looking at how we acquired them, makes us better able to adapt and change to suit new challenges.

GOOD TEACHERS ENJOY THEIR WORK AND THEIR STUDENTS.

This may seem obvious, but it's easy to lose sight of its importance. Teachers who enjoy their work and their students are motivated, energized, and creative. The opposite of enjoyment is burnout—the state where no one and nothing can spark any interest. Notice, too, that enjoying your work and enjoying your students may be two different things. Focusing too much on content may make students feel extraneous, misunderstood, or left out. Focusing exclusively on students, without an eye to content, may make students feel understood and appreciated, but may not help them to achieve their educational goals as quickly as they'd like. Achieving a balance between the two extremes takes time and attention; it demands that we observe closely, evaluate carefully, and act on our findings.

I would like to conclude with a poem by Lao-Tzu, the Chinese scholar to whom the *Tao Te Ching* is attributed. I have carried a copy of this poem with me for many years, and I find its message both helpful and challenging. It reminds us that good teaching is not a static state, but a constant process. We have new opportunities to become better teachers every day; good teachers are the ones who seize more opportunities than they miss.

Some say that my teaching is nonsense.
Others call it lofty but impractical.
But to those who have looked inside themselves,
this nonsense makes perfect sense.
And to those who put it into practice,
this loftiness has roots that go deep.

I have just three things to teach:
simplicity, patience, compassion.
Simple in actions and thoughts,
you return to the source of being.
Patient with both friends and enemies,
you accord with the way things are.
Compassionate toward yourself,
You reconcile all being in the world. (1989, 17)

Works Cited

Mitchell, Stephen, ed. (1989). *The Enlightened Heart*. NY: Harper & Row.

_____, trans. (1986). *Letters to a Young Poet*, by Rainer Maria Rilke. NY: Vintage Books.

Palmer, Parker. (1999). "The Grace of Great Things: Reclaiming the Sacred in Knowing, Teaching, and Learning." In *The Heart of Knowing: Spirituality in Education*. Ed. Stephen Glazer. NY: Jeremy P. Tarcher/ Putnam.

Successful Supervision: Three Perspectives

by Caroline Gear
Rebecca Shiffron
Steve Kurtz

Lutheran Social
Servcies
Springfield, MA
&
International
Language Institute
Northampton, MA

I have always looked for the perfect tool to use when observing teachers, and I have tried many different ones. What has become clear to me in the past year is that what matters most is not so much finding the "perfect tool", but how one uses it and adapts it to one's own program and purpose for observation.

For years I would take copious notes while observing a teacher and afterwards, I would type up the notes into a report form divided into the three categories of 1) time of activity, 2) description of the activity and 3) general comments. My biggest complaint in conducting observations in this way was that it was extremely time consuming. I spent more time writing the report then I did discussing the class with the teacher. After the follow-up meetings I would wonder how effective they really were. Were teachers using the observations and follow-up meetings as ways to improve their teaching? Or was this just a tool for me to evaluate teachers in the classroom and all the teachers got out of it was an evaluation in their file? As I look back at the way I used to conduct evaluations, I realize the process was too one-sided, not allowing a lot of teacher reflection.

My observation and follow-up with teachers changed dramatically in January of 1999 when I became involved in the School for International Training's (SIT) TESOL Certificate Program. In partnership with SIT, the International Language Institute now provides both intensive and part-time TESOL Certificate Programs.

An integral part of the SIT TESOL Certificate Program is giving the participants in the program a hands-on opportunity to teach followed by an in-depth feedback on the class. The form that SIT uses for its teacher observations is simple (see attached form). I liked the form immediately. It takes the three categories that I was using in my previous observations and puts them in a format that is clear. Most importantly, in the "comments" category, the emphasis is on posing questions rather than writing possibly critical statements on what is going on in the class.

After using this assessment tool a few times, I began to realize that how I had previously been observing teachers was more "observer centered". My observations and follow-up meetings were not set up to allow the teachers time to reflect on the class that they had taught, and I was the one who would initiate the discussion about the class.

Under the SIT model, I now give the instructor a copy of the form I filled out while observing the class as soon as the class is over. We then make an appointment within the next few days to discuss the class. Teachers have the opportunity between the observation and the follow-up meetings to really think about specific questions or issues, rather than wonder what comments the observer had about the class. Discussions during the follow-up meetings are initiated more by the teacher as s/he responds to the questions that

The best follow-up meetings are when there is truly a dialogue between observer and teacher. The playing field has been leveled and both parties strategize together on ways to improve the class.

were posed to her/him on the observation form rather than a one-sided conversation with the observer telling the teacher about what worked or did not work in the classroom.

I do not think any assessment tool works perfectly the first time that it is used. When using the SIT Observation Form, the more the observer becomes familiar with the process of asking the right questions for teacher reflection, the better the follow-up meetings will be. For me, the best follow-up meetings are when there is truly a dialogue between observer and teacher. The playing field has been leveled and both parties strategize together on ways to improve the class.

Obviously, this type of dialogue can never happen if the observations are handled by administrators who have very little teaching experience and whose purpose is only to evaluate the teacher. This assessment tool works best when the observer has a lot of classroom instruction experience along with the ability of highlighting the strengths and posing questions when there are weaknesses. The purpose of the observation tool is focused more on giving the teacher support and providing an arena for reflection and growth rather than just evaluating her/his teaching.

Just as I was changing my method of observing teachers, Rebecca Schiffren from Lutheran Social Services called me with concerns about her observations of teachers. The International Language Institute and Lutheran Social Services of West Springfield are funded together to provide ESOL services both in Northampton and West Springfield.

Rebecca and I met to discuss the tool and then both used the tool to observe a teacher who was teaching a practice class. (As part of the hiring process at ILI, applicants have to teach a 30-minute practice class.) We found that the assessment tool was difficult to use in a practice class, but it allowed Rebecca and me to talk about what questions we would have asked the teacher about the class and a hands-on opportunity to evaluate how this tool would work with other teacher trainers.

What follows is how Rebecca used the tool with one of her teachers, Steve Kurtz, and Steve's reaction to the observation and follow-up meeting.

Rebecca's piece:

I was hired as an ESL teacher at Lutheran Social Services (LSS) in September, 1995. (I had been teaching ESL for six years before that.) In March, 1999 I was given the position of ESL Coordinator and part of my job was to observe and coach other teachers in our program.

I had never done this before and began by using a format that had been helpful to me when a supervisor used it while observing my class the previous year. That method was to describe the activities in detail and give positive feedback and constructive suggestions as to how to improve the lesson.

When I used this approach with one relatively new teacher, she said the critique and suggestions were helpful. With another teacher, however, the technique was not so successful. This was a relatively inexperienced teacher whose class attendance was slipping. I felt, after observing him, that there was a lot of room for improvement. I made many suggestions but sensed as the critique went on, that he became more and more defensive. In the end, I wasn't convinced he would be able to

take in the feedback and improve his teaching.

At this point, I met with Caroline Gear, who introduced me to a new technique she had learned working with The School for International Training (SIT). This approach was to use three columns: one for the time, the next for a running account of what was happening in the class, and the third for comments posed as questions. At the end of the lesson, the observer would pose more general questions that considered the lesson as a whole. The idea was for the input not to be critical but to give teachers room to think about ways of solving problems that made sense to them. I wondered whether this would work since raising a question, in my mind, implied a criticism.

Coincidentally, the meeting with Caroline happened just before my next scheduled observation of Steve so I had a perfect place to try out the new method. When students hadn't written in journals as assigned, I wrote, "Why do you think they aren't writing?" "How can you get them more interested in writing?" When students had trouble remembering and pronouncing past tense verb forms, I asked, "What other ways could you practice irregular past tense forms?" In the review session after the lesson, Steve reflected on these and other questions and came up with some new ways of approaching problems. When he was finished thinking about a question, I shared some of my experiences with the same issue. I felt that Steve was much more involved in this session. He thought about his teaching and was more enthusiastic and less defensive.

When I observed him again about a month later, he had made real strides in his teaching. He was much more assertive, had a plan and followed it. His students' attendance during the month had noticeably improved and they gave me positive feedback about his teaching (as opposed to earlier, when all I heard were complaints).

This method of observation and coaching proved to be extremely successful for Steve. It encourages reflection and exploration that is meaningful and empowering because it comes from the teacher's own experience. The method does require skill on the part of the observer — you must be aware of classroom dynamics and pose meaningful questions — but it gives teachers the responsibility (and power) to be actively involved in their own development.

My feelings during both the first and second classroom observations were similar: anxiety, nervousness, awkwardness, embarrassment, and increased adrenaline.

Steve's piece:

I have worked for twelve years as a teacher. Before my current position as an ESOL instructor, I was in the public schools, initially as a Spanish teacher and then as a bilingual social studies teacher. I have been in my current position as an ESOL instructor for two years.

Throughout my teaching career, supervisors have observed me between eight and ten times. In my current job, I have been observed on four different occasions by supervisors. I have made progress in improving my teaching style and classroom management; however my progress has been rather slow for the better part of a year. I struggled with important teaching areas and I began to wonder about my suitability for the profession.

My current supervisor began her official duties approximately six months ago. She has observed me four times, the first observation having occurred on April 14, 1999 and the most recent, on October 13, 1999.

Each of the observations consisted of an observation of me in the classroom and a feedback session, which followed. In this paper I want to describe how I have experienced these sessions and how the changes in my supervisor's feedback approach have impacted on my teaching.

After the first observation my supervisor and I met. She shared her notes and we discussed the lesson. Her notes consisted of six comments. For each comment she had written suggestions for ways to improve or modify my teaching. I felt somewhat deflated and discouraged during the above-described meeting. I listened to my supervisor, tried to act like a good adult professional, yet I felt like very much the opposite. My feelings of discouragement continued for a while after the session. I knew the suggestions were good. Now I had to "deliver."

Before the second observation/feedback session (July 7, 1999) my supervisor informed me that she was going to change her approach. She briefly described the new approach and how it would differ from the first observation in April. She asked me if I wanted her to focus on any particular aspect of my teaching.

In the July 7 feedback session my supervisor included clock times for her observations. After each comment she posed a question. For example:

> *Comment:* 6:25 Students talked about fireworks, not seeing them before.
>
> *Question:* "How could you have extended the talk about fireworks? They were interested and it was 'real' talk."

I then offered my response to the question. "I could have encouraged them to talk about fireworks in their own countries and how they compare with fireworks in the USA."

During the July 7 class I had planned a session in which students would practice question formation using the July 4 weekend as a stimulus. Students were very involved in discussing the fireworks theme in their conversation partners, when I ended this activity and began another activity involving story writing with numbered pictures. The abrupt move from an activity in which students were very engaged to another activity with little transition or preparation confused the students. Moreover, this new activity was unrelated to its predecessor. At the end of this session (and subsequent sessions) my supervisor included comments which were more global in scope. These comments helped me come away from the session with a kind of quiet "mantra," which would apply to a broader range of situations.

Also, in the second and subsequent feedback sessions, my supervisor posed her questions and waited for my response. This waiting or pause was an invitation for me to offer a thoughtful response. I was given real time. My response was important.

My feelings during both the first and second classroom observations were similar: anxiety, nervousness, awkwardness, embarrassment and increased adrenaline.

During the third and fourth observations, I continued to be anxious and felt high adrenaline flowing through me. The difference was that I felt more energetic, more in control and, in general, more positive about my teaching. I'm not certain how much of this improvement can be attributed to the new observation procedures. Perhaps, the good results have

come from both the new procedures and from the increased trust I have for my supervisor.

During this process my feelings about my work have changed. I feel more hopeful and more positive. I am still very much a teacher who needs to improve his performance. The difference is in the kind of clarity of thought that I have now. "Clarity" for me means that I'm focusing more on what I am doing and less on what I'm failing to do. The question is "Why?"

First, by presenting information and observations and following each observation with a question, my supervisor is inviting me to participate. She is implying that I have the ability to be analytical. The question is still a form of criticism but it is a form of criticism in which I offer my own analysis. The analysis is mine.

Second, the process of observation and question invites me to focus on a solution. Since I am invited to answer a question, to respond to that question, I am further empowered to design a solution and implement it. I am focusing on what I need to do to improve and not on what I haven't done or on what I have been failing to do.

☑

SIT TESOL Certificate Program Observation Sheet

Teacher: _____ Date: _____

Number of Students: ____ Level: _____ Observer: _____

Time	Steps of Lesson	Comments

Volume
12 • 18

A Curriculum Project

by
Sherry Spaulding

International Institute
of Boston

The International Institute of Boston (IIB) has been in operation serving refugees and immigrants in the Boston community for more than 75 years. Through the years the agency has offered a variety of educational programs to refugees and immigrants and the opportunity for many talented teachers to develop well-planned, well-written curricula. As changes occur in student population, teaching philosophies and methodologies, learners' needs, and in our language and culture, it is necessary for curricula to continually evolve.

Earlier this year, IIB received funding from the Massachusetts Department of Education for a six-month project to expand the current curriculum for our evening ESOL program. This program currently offers three levels of ESOL to adult immigrants and refugees. Classes are held two evenings a week with an optional third evening for learning computer skills and for computer-assisted language learning (CALL). The proposal we submitted for this project outlined three objectives: 1) to develop an evening ESOL curriculum; 2) to develop sample needs assessment tools; and 3) to incorporate technology into the ESOL curriculum, all in all, a very ambitious proposal. The majority of the work I did as coordinator of this project was on the first two objectives. The third objective was accomplished with the help of our Technology Coordinator who trained teachers one-on-one and helped them to develop appropriate CALL activities for their classes.

The curriculum which was being used in IIB's evening ESOL program prior to this project had been based primarily on life skills and job skills because it was developed for our intensive day program for newly-arrived refugees and dislocated workers. Because our evening ESOL program serves a greater diversity of learners from many different countries — refugees, immigrants, employed, unemployed — it was necessary to develop a curriculum that would address a broader range of needs. I wanted to take a bottom-up approach to developing this curriculum by assessing both learners' and teachers' needs and utilizing the knowledge and expertise that our teachers bring to the program to develop a helpful and informative curriculum guide. I also worked with a group of Massachusetts teachers, Department of Education representatives and consultants who have been working together to develop a statewide Framework for Adult ESOL.

GATHERING LEARNER INPUT

Because I stepped out of my role as teacher to be the coordinator of this project, I decided to work primarily with the ESOL members of our Student Council. The Council consists of two representatives from each of our evening ESOL and ABE (for non-native English speakers) classes. The Council was originally formed to have more student representation in planning and evaluating our evening programs, and

to provide a vehicle for tapping into our learners' needs. It also gave those participating on the Council an opportunity to take on leadership roles: offering ideas for improving our programs, planning events, informing fellow classmates of events, developing surveys and gathering input from fellow classmates.

I met with the ESOL members of our Student Council for about 30-45 minutes prior to class time on three occasions. The meetings were conducted in English. I posed several questions, starting with the obvious: "Why are you here? Why do you need to learn English?" The obvious response was to become self sufficient, or in the words of one Council member, *"I don't like to ask my friends, my family, please help me."* The questions I generated focused on the use of English at home, at work, and in the community.

I chose to focus on these three areas because of information I have gathered at meetings and conferences; from speakers from Equipped For the Future (EFF); from Heide Spruck Wrigley, a consultant from AGUIRRE International who often discusses the importance of gathering input on learners' needs in the areas of home, work, neighborhood/community, education/school and getting things done; and from representatives from the Massachusetts Department of Education who emphasized at an initial curriculum frameworks meeting the need for a customer-driven learning environment that is responsive to the needs of learners in their three roles: as family member, worker and citizen.

My hope was to obtain information from learners themselves about their needs, interests and goals. With that information, we could create a learner-centered curriculum. How to gather information from students with limited English language skills is always a challenge. Often I used pictures to facilitate conversation. For example, to initiate our discussion about work, I used pictures of people in various jobs as a code for getting students to talk about their own work situations. The questions I asked in the three areas included:

At Home: Why do you need English at home? How do you feel when the phone rings? Who do you need to talk to on the phone in English? What mail do you need to read in English? What do you do when you can't read the mail you receive? Do your children often talk on the phone and translate mail for you? How do you feel about that?

At Work: Was it easy to get your job? Why/why not? How did you get your job? Do you like your job? Why/why not? What did you do in your native country? Do you need English for your job? Why/why not? Who do you talk to? What do you need to read at work? Write at work? What are your plans for the future?

In the Community: Where do you go alone? Where do you go with someone else? Why do you need someone else to go with you to this place? Are there places you don't go? Why? Do you have problems that you need to solve but you don't know where to go for the right information?

We gathered considerable input on what systems learners need to navigate when the Coordinator of Adult Education and I met with all the Student Council members from our ABE and ESOL programs to brainstorm on which guest

[The process] gave those participating on the Council an opportunity to take on leadership roles: offering ideas for improving our programs, planning events, informing fellow classmates of events, developing surveys and gatehring input from fellow classmates.

It seemed impossible to generate one survey that was appropriate for all the skill levels of our learners in ESOL and ABE.

speakers they would like to invite to our school. The Council gave ideas and shared personal stories and then we surveyed all of the learners in the two programs.

It seemed impossible to generate one survey that was appropriate for all the skill levels of our learners in ESOL and ABE, so I developed three versions of a survey in hopes that each teacher could use one appropriate to his/her class and as part of a lesson. For example, the survey used by the lowest level ABE class displays pictures to help represent each system. The teacher could use the pictures on the survey to brainstorm on large paper reasons students gave for wanting a certain speaker and the survey was simple enough for these learners to check which speakers they wanted.

Another version asked learners "why" they wanted a certain speaker, which gave them an opportunity to write. Also, rather than asking students directly, "What problems do you have?", this more indirect way of simply asking students why they are interested in this guest speaker encourages them to share personal stories if they wish without feeling anxious about having to tell their problems. The feedback we gathered from this particular activity was very informative and was used to develop the section in our ESOL curriculum on navigating systems.

The surveys are included at the end of this article.

GATHERING TEACHER INPUT

I met several times with teachers in staff meetings and one-on-one. I wanted to know how often they referred to the current curriculum guide, what they thought should be included in a curriculum and what was not clear to them about our ESOL program.

Because there had been some confusion as to when to move students to a higher or lower level class, it seemed obvious that our levels needed to be more clearly defined for teachers. To address this, I asked teachers to list their students' strengths and weaknesses on large pieces of paper in the categories of the five strands of the Frameworks for Adult ESOL: oral and written communication, language structure and mechanics, navigating systems, intercultural knowledge and skills, and developing strategies and resources for learning.

The first significant piece of information we acquired from this activity was that the teachers could very easily list specific strengths and weaknesses in only two of the five strands: oral and written communication, and language structure and mechanics. The reason was primarily because these are the areas we assess. At the end of each term our teachers meet with learners one-on-one to assess speaking and listening skills and then learners are given a written test to assess reading and writing skills. Therefore, we are assessing a learner's ability to communicate meaningfully and accurately.

It also became very clear to us through this activity that the primary focus of our Beginner Level class is on developing oral communication skills. In Level 1 the learners' needs are more varied in terms of oral and written communication skills but the focus is still on improving oral communication. In Level 2, learners have the skills to communicate; they need to work on accuracy. Because our program places learners in classes based primarily on listening/speaking ability rather than reading/writing ability, this is where there is the great-

est differentiation of skill areas. Some learners are very weak in reading and/or writing while others who have studied in our program or other ESOL programs are more proficient in those areas.

To tap into the teachers' knowledge and skills, I asked them how they decide what to teach, how they assess their learners' needs, and how they involve students in curriculum planning. Much of the input I gathered from these meetings with teachers has been included in a section of our curriculum on ways to assess learners needs. I also developed a needs assessment resource binder which includes sample lessons and activities teachers have used to gather input on learners' interests, needs and goals.

EVENING ESOL CURRICULUM

As a result of many productive meetings and helpful input from active learners and experienced teachers, an evening ESOL curriculum with a number of sections emerged. We hope it will give teachers a holistic picture of the learners, program, curriculum content, important definitions and procedures specific to IIB.

Defining our program

In order to give teachers a clear understanding of our program and how learners are placed in levels we included sections entitled:

- What is IIB's mission?
- Who are our ESOL learners?
- The mission of our evening ESOL program
- How do we initially assess learners?

For example, the way in which we assess and place learners into classes is as follows:

- Applicants are asked to complete an intake form as best they can without assistance in order to check for basic comprehension of forms. The intake form asks for personal information, work information and personal goals.
- A teacher will begin with an informal conversation with the applicant to predetermine the range of level, and to select appropriate assessment tools as well as to help the applicant feel at ease during the assessment.
- The teacher gives the short form of the BEST oral test to the applicant to determine an SPL level for listening and speaking.
- Applicants are then asked to read a passage at one of three levels which is chosen by the teacher based on the BEST score. The teacher asks questions about the passage orally to which the learner responds orally. The teacher will choose an appropriate grammar test or tests from three examples. Finally, the applicant is asked to write responses to questions or to write a short paragraph. Again the teacher chooses which format is most appropriate to the applicant, in order to check vocabulary, spelling and grammar. The teacher then determines an SPL level for reading and writing based on the reading passage, grammar test(s) and writing sample.
- The teacher decides level of placement based primarily on the SPL for speaking and listening but uses the reading/writing score to determine whether the applicant has formally studied English previously, which may promote him/her to a higher level. Also taken into consideration is an applicant's level of education and whether he/she has con-

Determining the expected outcomes for each level was the most difficult part to write.

tact with other native English speakers outside the class. If an applicant has skills which are too high for our program, he/she is provided information on other programs.

- If an applicant's literacy level is too low for our ESOL program, several options are considered. If the applicant has an SPL 3 or higher in speaking and listening he/she may be a candidate for our ABE for non-native English speakers program which focuses on literacy, reading and writing. If the applicant is a beginner in speaking, listening and literacy, he/she has the option of joining a daytime Beginner ESOL Basic Literacy class if his/her schedule allows. IIB also provides volunteer trainings and applicants may be paired with a volunteer tutor.

Defining Our Levels

In order to more clearly define our three ESOL levels and learners, we incorporated a detailed description of each level including the following sections:

- SPLs
- Student profiles
- Expected outcomes
- Curriculum guide to content areas
- Language structure and mechanics

The SPL section describes the listening/speaking and reading/writing range of learners entering that level. The profiles provide general descriptions of learners at that level which may emphasize inconsistencies, e.g., in listening comprehension, pronunciation, reading or writing abilities. The section on expected outcomes describes the primary focus of learning at that level and what should be achieved prior to moving to the next level. Finally, the guides to content areas and language structure and mechanics are lists of life skills and grammar skills to be addressed at that level.

Determining the expected outcomes for each level was the most difficult part to write. Our outcomes are general and yet they do reflect what learners should be able to do before entering a higher level. Because class placement is primarily based on learners' oral and listening comprehension skills, our outcomes focus more on improvement of these skills and less on reading and writing skills. For Beginner Level and Level 1 there is a stronger emphasis on ability to communicate, while Level 2 emphasizes accuracy in ability to communicate. Below are a few examples of outcomes developed for each ESOL level.

Beginner Level

- Learners are able to respond to basic oral and written questions about personal information including name, address, telephone number, age, date of birth, and country of origin.
- Learners are able to respond to basic oral and written questions about their current job situation or past job(s), for example, job title(s), place of employment, at least one duty, and dates of employment.

Level 1

- Learners are able to respond to oral and written questions about personal information including name, address, telephone number, social security number, age, sex, marital status, date and coun-

try of birth, nationality, and native language(s).

- Learners are able to communicate their future plans and personal goals.

Level 2

- Learners are able to monitor their own speech, meaning that they are self-correcting or can self-correct when an error has been made apparent to them, provided the grammar structure has been taught at this level.
- Learners are able to clearly communicate their problems in contexts which affect their lives, e.g., housing problems, health problems, etc.

Other Helpful Sections in our ESOL Curriculum

In addition to the sections in IIB's curriculum defining our program and levels, we've included several other sections which include:

- Navigating systems
- Intercultural knowledge and skills
- Developing strategies and resources for learning
- Ways to assess learners' needs
- Guidelines for cycle-end assessment of students
- Guidelines for determining SPLs
- M.E.L.T. student performance levels

As we heard from students, it was clear to us that understanding and negotiating a complexity of systems was important. We included a section entitled "Navigating Systems" in our curriculum. It is similar to the guide to content areas incorporated into the descriptions of levels, but is divided by system as opposed to level of proficiency. Here is an example of one system:

Systems of Transportation

- Knowing types of public transportation, e.g., subways, trains, buses, and commuter rail.
- Being able to ask for directions and location of stops, to request a stop on a bus or subway.
- Knowing where to get schedules, how to ask for and read schedules.
- Knowing where to buy tokens and passes and the different types of passes.
- Being able to ask for a certain amount of tokens or a certain type of pass.
- Knowing how to get to destinations beyond the local area using transportation, e.g., Amtrak, airlines or bus lines.
- Knowing how to buy tickets and make reservations to places beyond the local area, and how to ask questions regarding schedules and prices.

The sections on "Intercultural Knowledge and Skills" and "Developing Strategies and Resources for Learning" primarily make reference to resources at IIB and the Massachusetts Frameworks for Adult ESOL for further information. To help teachers plan ways to assess their learners' needs, we included in our curriculum a collection of methods gathered from teachers and from reference materials for assessing what learners need and want to learn. To help teachers plan final evaluation activities we have included guidelines for cycle-end assessment and for determining students' SPLs and level advancement.

THE WORK CONTINUES

This curriculum is still a work-in-progress. Now it is necessary to critically evaluate it. Are the levels more clearly defined? Are the expected outcomes for each level realistic? Do teachers feel that this is a helpful guide? How are students responding? What else would we like to include? In the future, as our program continues to change and as expertise grows in the ESOL field, there will be more opportunities for teachers to further develop curricula. Taking on this role was a great learning experience for me and I have benefited from the knowledge I have gained from teachers, learners and consultants with whom I have worked.

I want someone to come and speak about…

1._____Banking

2._____Healthcare

3._____ College or a GED Program

4._____ Boston's Public Schools

5._____ Unions and Labor Laws

6._____ Tax Forms

7._____ The Library

8._____ The Fire Department

9._____ The Police Department

10._____ Home Mortgages

I want someone to come and speak about...

1._____**Banking**

Why? _____

_____

2._____**Healthcare**

Why? _____

_____

3._____ **College or a GED Program**

Why? _____

_____

4._____ **Boston's Public Schools**

Why? _____

_____

5._____ **Unions and Labor Laws**

Why? _____

_____

_____

6._____ **Tax Forms**

Why? _____

_____

7._____ **The Library**

Why? _____

_____

8._____ **The Fire Department**

Why? _____

_____

9._____ **The Police Department**

Why? _____

_____

10._____ **Home Mortgages**

Why? _____

_____

Other _____

Volume
12 • 28

A Performance Framework for Teaching and Learning with the Equipped for the Future (EFF) Content Standards

by
Peggy McGuire

EFF Assessment
Coordinator,
Philadelphia, PA

Equipped for the Future (EFF) is a grassroots and collaborative initiative of the National Institute for Literacy, aimed at the reform of this country's Adult Education and Lifelong Learning System so that the latter becomes thoroughly and consistently standards-based and customer-driven. Building consensus on the results that matter to all the customers of the system is the first and most important component of this reform since it provides the foundation for real change in teaching and learning.

Through research and consensus-building over the past several years, we have been able to describe the knowledge and skills all adults need to be effective in carrying out activities central to their roles as parents and family members, citizens and community members, and workers. The EFF Content Standards express this consensus on what adults need to know and be able to do. And teachers all over the country, in ABE and ESOL classes, in Even Start and Welfare-to-Work programs, have been using the tools of the EFF Content Framework — the Role Maps, the Common Activities, the Skills Wheel, the Standards — to translate learner goals into instruction. They are able to do so because these components of the Content Framework reflect a dual focus on building skills and applying those skills to achieve real-life "results that matter".

Having established what adults need to know and be able to do, our current task is to use a similar research and consensus-building process to develop an Assessment Framework that supports the Standards. This Assessment Framework will allow us to measure how well students are able to use what they know and report it in a meaningful way. It will move us from "EFF Content Standards" toward "EFF Performance Standards".

One of the key tasks of this new phase of development is to define levels for each of the individual EFF standards — specifically, to build a research-based performance continuum for each EFF standard that will support the identification of level descriptors for all 16 standards.

ADULT COMPETENCE AND A "CONTINUUM OF PERFORMANCE"

To imagine a continuum of performance that stayed true to the foundation of EFF, we had to first ask what adult "competence" looks like. How do we express skill development and application as it relates to the purposes and role-centered activities that adults carry out as they move and grow through their lives, adding skills, knowledge and abilities that increase their flexibility in responding to change? In moving from Content Standards describing what adults know and can do, to Performance Standards describing how well they know and can do, to which characteristics of performance is it important to pay attention?

We began by looking at other frameworks that have attempted to define a

similarly broad continuum of adult performance, including the National Adult Literacy Survey (NALS) and the qualifications frameworks developed by Australia, England, Scotland, South Africa, and New Zealand. We also looked at cognitive science research on expertise and transfer, and data from EFF field development sites that included teacher descriptions of student performance. Our goal was to identify a theory-based set of dimensions for describing performance at both ends of the continuum: adults with many years of formal education and advanced degrees at the high end, and adults with few years of formal education and low English literacy skills at the beginning.

We were sensitive to the failure of existing adult frameworks to adequately discriminate among performances at the low end of the scale. We paid very close attention to data from our field sites that defined the kind of evidence of progress teachers looked for and how they described student performances. At the same time, we made the assumption that the goal of the adult literacy system for adults at the low end of the scale (as for all other adults) is to facilitate increasingly more effective performance in the world. We wanted to be sure to build one continuum, and not to strand low-literate adults on a special, developmental continuum cut off from movement along the main pathway toward mastery and expert performance.

Since research over the past 20 years has been building a greater understanding of the cognitive and metacognitive strategies used by expert performers and how they differ from those used by novice performers, we began to examine whether we could build our continuum on this theoretical foundation.

DIMENSIONS OF PERFORMANCE

We have identified four key dimensions of performance to generate detailed descriptions of learner performance. We will eventually place those descriptions on a developmental performance continuum for each EFF standard. These dimensions are:

- Depth and breadth of a knowledge base.
- Degree of fluency and flexibility with which one can perform.
- Degree of independence.
- Range of conditions under which one can perform.

What is a knowledge base and how do we build it? Traditionally we think of a knowledge base as "what you know". The cognitive science research on expertise and transfer asks us to think not only about how *much* one knows (the number of facts, procedures, concepts, etc.) but also how the knowledge is organized. The goal is to assure that as an individual's store of knowledge relative to a particular domain or skill grows, the structure of the knowledge base also develops, becoming increasingly coherent, principled, useful, and goal oriented. This means that what a person knows – at whatever level of knowledge – is organized for efficient retrieval and application in everyday life. She has access to that knowledge, and can draw upon it for effective action in the world.

As an individual moves along a developmental continuum from "novice" toward "expert", then she develops more and better strategies for organizing the contents of her knowledge base around principles and concepts. To "organize" is to see, and eventually develop new "patterns" of information. By "patterns" we mean connections or relationships between 1) facts, 2) facts and concepts, and/or

Our goal was to identify a theory-based set of dimensions for describing performance at both ends of the continuum: adults with many years of formal education and advanced degrees at the high end, and adults with few years of formal education and low English literacy skills at the beginning.

3) prior knowledge and newly-acquired facts, connections or relationships that are based on some bigger themes or concepts that tie the bits of information together.

As what an individual knows becomes more organized, growing expertise is also marked by increased ability to identify what information is relevant to a particular task or problem. Further, the individual becomes more and more able to identify the conditions under which particular kinds of knowledge are useful. The "expert", then, has many strategies to retrieve and use information that is appropriate to whatever work she is trying to accomplish, in whatever context she finds herself.

We see evidence of such developments in the knowledge base in improved performance along the other three dimensions we have identified. In other words, a more coherent, principled knowledge base supports performance with greater fluency, greater independence, under a greater range of conditions.

What do we mean by building greater fluency and flexibility of performance? We are all familiar with the axiom "practice makes perfect." EFF defines this dimension as the level of effort required for an individual to retrieve and apply relevant knowledge. Points along the continuum range from "a great deal of effort" through "some effort," and "fluent" to "automatic."

Why performing with increasing independence? An important indicator of an adult's increasing skill is the extent to which he or she needs direction or guidance in using that skill. EFF borrows DeFabio's definition of independence for this dimension: "an individual's ability to select, plan, execute, and monitor his or her own performance without reliance on the direction of others." Points along a skill development continuum for this dimension of performance would look at a decreasing need for assistance in carrying out these executive (or metacognitive) functions of performance, whether a person is acting alone or in collaboration with others.

What about increasing the range of performance? This dimension gets to the heart of defining how well an individual can use a skill. Included in our concept of "range" are variables related to both task and context. These variables include the type as well as the number of tasks and contexts in which one can use the skill. Variables to consider include the degree of familiarity / unfamiliarity of a task or context; the structuredness/unstructuredness of the task; and the complexity of the task. Increase in range, like increase in independence, is directly related to the growth and more principled organization of one's knowledge base.

We have focused on these four dimensions of performance because they address not only what people know but also how well they can use what they know. Together, they comprise a simple, coherent, research-based picture of performance that makes sense within programs as well as to all the many publics that care about what people can do (and where their limits are) as a result of their learning.

EFF FIELD DEVELOPMENT

Phase 3 of EFF field development (1999-2000) has been engaging practitioners from five states (Maine, Ohio, Oregon, Tennessee and Washington) in using these four dimensions. Each participating teacher from the 15 to 20 field development program sites is currently collecting information about student performance and

progress against two EFF Content Standards. They are utilizing a new data collection template which focuses observation and documentation of learner performance on the four dimensions of skill performance. Thus the information they provide will enable us to construct a performance continuum for each standard that is based both on practice and on cognitive development. As a result, we will be able to develop EFF descriptors that correspond to the "levels" of other systems (the National Reporting System, for instance) and identify not only what skills adults have, but also what adults can do with those skills.

The data collection template being used for this field research was developed through the efforts of a group of teachers, EFF staff and Technical Assistance Team members who began meeting in Summer, 1999. We began with a template that articulated the four key dimensions of performance as a guide for placing these descriptions on a developmental performance continuum.

Teachers found the template too confusing and suggested that it would be easier to use if the dimensions were embedded in categories that reflected how teachers think about planning and instruction. Guided by this insight, we reorganized the template to focus on four categories: task, context, knowledge, and performance.

Task and context break out two aspects of range of conditions to reflect how teachers begin planning for appropriate instruction. The focus here is *what learners can do* with a particular skill or combination of skills. Thus, EFF teachers will likely use key components of the EFF Content Framework — Role Maps and Common Activities — to develop meaningful learning opportunities in which knowledge and skills are linked to real-life tasks and contexts.

Knowledge remains a single dimension. Degree of fluency and degree of independence are combined into one performance category since teachers found that they looked at these two aspects together. All three relate to *what learners know*. Furthermore, as noted earlier, growing fluency and independence relate directly to the extent to which knowledge is organized around important concepts and principles. Thus, a "well-organized" knowledge base is the bridge between "knowing" and "doing".

To assist teachers in using the four dimensions in planning and instruction, we asked questions about each category, as if we were developing an "observation rubric."

Field development participants are using this revised template to develop an ongoing record of what learners can do with specific skills, a collection of evidence "moments" over time that together create the "big picture" of real-world outcomes. We hope the template will help teachers draw pictures of learner performance which capture the complexity of what learners are capable of performing, and communicate it in a way that is easy to understand.

Field development participants are using this revised template to develop an on-going record of what learners can do with specific skills, a collection of evidence "moments" over time that together create the "big picture" of real-world outcomes.

A PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

While the development work described here is ongoing, we are well aware that many teachers are already using the EFF Content Framework and are excited by its usefulness in placing learner goals squarely at the center of their work. We wanted to support their ongoing efforts while also providing them with a tool to help them to begin to use the four dimensions to inform their practice.

Staying focused on the components of performance allows EFF teachers and learners to be sure that everyone is focused on the same important things when planning, implementing and assessing learning activities.

To that end, the categories and their related performance questions from the data collection template have also been organized into a one-page document, the "EFF Performance Framework" *(see Figure 1)* which is available now for any EFF teacher to use in planning, implementing and assessing instruction around the EFF Content Standards. The "EFF Performance Framework" integrates the four dimensions into a set of observation protocols, or questions. The questions focus on the most important aspects of learner performance for developing expertise. These are the questions that we hope that every teacher who is teaching to the EFF Content Standards will ask herself

- when she is trying to understand what her learners already know and are able to do;
- when she is planning instructional activities to fill in gaps and strengthen skills; and
- when she is assessing skill development post-instruction, as a result of the planned instructional activities.

This is a research-based framework through which to look at learner performance and answer the questions "What do students know?" and "What can students do with this knowledge?" We hope teachers will carry this framework around, refer to it often, and finally integrate it into their thinking about teaching, learning and assessing with the EFF Standards so well that it becomes second nature — that they become "experts" at focusing their thinking on the four dimensions of performance. Furthermore, the framework is usable for any/all of the standards, and for collecting detailed evidence in a way that it can be compared.

Using the Performance Framework in practice requires teachers and learners to stay focused on the components of performance for each standard. A lot of the power and promise of the framework comes from the fact that the Content Standards are consensus statements of what is important to teach and learn for each skill. The components of performance break down what needs to be taught and assessed to ensure that learners develop and can use the EFF skill. Staying focused on the components of performance allows EFF teachers and learners to be sure that everyone is focused on the same important things when planning, implementing and assessing learning activities.

In other words, focus on the EFF components of performance allows for greater standardization of instruction without sacrificing flexibility, creativity, or accommodation of diverse learning styles and needs. It enables us to reliably say: "Adults with this skill can do these things — to act flexibly, with a range of options and choices, to meet the goals in their lives — and this is how we know."

The Performance Framework, then, is a starting point for focusing teaching and learning on EFF Standards and on the four key dimensions of skill development and application. By establishing the four dimensions as the basis for our Performance Framework as well as for our developmental continuum, EFF aims to help teachers and learners keep simultaneous focus on EFF skills development (what adults know) and on EFF skills application (what adults can do with that knowledge).

USING THE PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK TO PAY ATTENTION TO CRITICAL ASPECTS OF TEACHING AND LEARNING

In order to insure that learners are developing the skills that they need to reach their goals, the EFF Performance Framework encourages teachers and learners to pay attention to the following aspects of performance before, during and after instructional activities focused on the EFF Content Standards:

1) Tasks

(Dimension: range of conditions under which one can perform)

What kinds of tasks can learners perform?

What are the activities that learners engage in that require use of the skill? These tasks might be carried out in the instructional setting and might be contained in a discrete lesson or a series of lessons. Or, learners may be performing the tasks in other settings, such as at home or in their communities. In either case, the task will be identified because it requires use of the targeted EFF skill as well as relates to a learner's goal or purpose.

How complex is the task? Is it simple, one-step, brief, short-term, well-defined and highly structured, requiring very little judgment or prediction of outcomes? Or is it more complex, longer and more sustained, involving multiple steps, less defined or structured, or even self-defined and self-initiated, requiring careful judgment and accurate prediction of outcomes?

How familiar is the task to the learner? Some guiding questions would be "Has the learner done this task before? Has the learner seen this task done before?"

EXAMPLE:

You are focusing on the EFF Standard "Use Information and Communications Technology", and your learners' goals involve using computers well enough to produce a publication that can communicate important information to others about a local community organizing effort. Reaching this goal will require mastery of a large range of tasks.

Complexity: A simple task might be safely turning on and off the computer, or somewhat more complex, safely entering and exiting a word processing program. As the learners' skills develop, they will engage in ever more complex tasks, from writing and saving short written documents, to editing and rearranging text; highly complex tasks, requiring strong skills, might include using graphics, multiple fonts, even a desktop publishing program to write and produce a professional newsletter.

Familiarity: Has the learner ever seen a computer before? Ever used a computer? Ever used a word processing program? Ever worked with publishing software? At the high end of the continuum, the learner has performed the task at hand many times before, or has seen it done often before; thus it is a familiar task. Further down the continuum, tasks are less and less familiar to the learner — all the way to those that the learner has never before performed or seen done.

2) Contexts

(Dimension: range of conditions under which one can perform)

In what contexts can learners perform?

How familiar are the learners with the context?

Carrying out a task in a very familiar

Movement along [a] continuum is marked by ability to perform [a] task in a growing number of different contexts, indicating that the learner is transferring the use of EFF skills from one activity to another.

situation where there is a lot of assistance and support is easier for learners than carrying out the same task in a less familiar, less supported context. At the high end of the continuum, the context is very familiar — for instance, exclusively in the classroom or instructional situation. Further down the continuum, the context becomes less familiar — on the job, in a community meeting, in the home where the learner has never tried to accomplish this particular task before.

In how many different situations can the learners perform?

At the low end of the continuum, the learner can only accomplish the task in a single situation (such as the instructional setting). Movement along the continuum is marked by ability to perform the task in a growing number of different contexts — indicating also that the learner is transferring the use of EFF skills from one activity or role to another. At the highest point, the situations in which the learner can perform are multiple and varied; learners can perform the task to meet a variety of needs and purposes, and their transfer of skill use from one context to another is systematic.

How much risk is involved in the situation? how high are the stakes?

The external environment in which learners are trying to accomplish goals can often present significant challenges to achievement. Some of these challenges have to do with "why" the learner is performing a task. What is at stake? Is this about successfully following directions in class? passing a credentialing exam, like the GED? getting/keeping a good job? Another aspect of "risk" has to do with more personal and/or societal challenges that learners often face in their efforts. Is there a threat of abuse in the home? Are there issues of racism/sexism/homophobia/etc. in the community? Are decent jobs unavailable, or in settings that pose risks to workers?

At one end of the continuum, such risks are minimal, and the stakes are low. At the other, risks/stakes increase.

EXAMPLE:

You are working with the EFF Standard "Speak So Others Can Understand", and learners are hoping to present testimony at upcoming statewide hearings on Adult Education funding.

Familiarity: At the low end of the continuum, the context for speaking in front of a group will be most familiar to the learners — in the learners' own instructional setting, in front of a small group of fellow learners, perhaps. Further along, the context becomes less familiar — in a different classroom, in front of a different group of learners, or the agency staff, or its Board. The context of the state hearings would be high on the continuum, assuming learners have never spoken in front of state legislators and so are unfamiliar with that context.

Number of different situations: At the low end, learners can speak before a group only in one situation — the instructional setting in this example. But as development along the continuum proceeds, learners can perform outside the instructional setting and in increasing numbers of situations — in other classes, at Staff or Board meetings, before the Home-School Association, at state hearings.

Level of risk: Relatively low-risk/low-stakes contexts, on the low end of the continuum, might include a classroom full of supportive co-learners or before other au-

diences who will not make major decisions about the learner based on the performance. Even at the state hearings, where learner performance may have a profound impact on listeners, the risk to the individual learners is not at the highest end of the continuum. But learners may soon need to use their speaking skills in much higher-stakes contexts — before potential employers or in an attempt to gain a seat on the local school board, for instance.

We also need to understand, if possible, the personal challenges that contribute to the level of risk. For instance, one impact of the psychological effects of various forms of abuse can be eroded self-confidence which makes speaking in any public situation a very high-risk activity. Then, what may otherwise seem a low-risk context needs to be accounted for at a higher point on the continuum.

3) Knowledge Base

(Dimension: depth and breadth of knowledge base)

When we consider the Knowledge Base necessary for any EFF skill, remember that we are looking at skills in the contexts of purpose (what adults need to know to meet their expressed goal) and performance (what adults need to be able to do with what they know). So we need to look at content knowledge, but we also need to look beyond content knowledge to how we organize and apply the content knowledge in meaningful contexts. This focus on use of skills to meet specific purposes may explain why so much "EFF Teaching" so often looks like "authentic task" or "project" based learning (content + application) instead of "drill and practice" (content only).

The following two questions refer to what is contained in the knowledge base for the targeted EFF skill; the third question, and its subset of questions, refer to specific strategies for organizing and applying the contents of Knowledge Base for use in a meaningful context.

What do learners know?

What vocabulary do the learners have related to the skill? related to the subject area?

Depending on the task to be accomplished, learners will need to understand different amounts and kinds of language used in the subject matter, as well as language about the skills being developed in the task. At the low end of the continuum, learners will only have minimal and simple vocabulary; as they move along in development, their store of vocabulary will grow and begin to include less familiar and more technical terminology.

What content knowledge do the learners have related to the skill? related to the subject area?

"Content knowledge" for any skill or subject area includes familiarity with facts, operations, concepts, rules, protocols, practices and/or conditions of use essential to the skill/subject area — including the purpose and audience for skill performance. At the low end of the continuum, learners have minimal or no familiarity with these essential content aspects of the skill/subject. As learners develop the skill, they become more and more familiar with an increasing amount of content knowledge that is useful in a greater variety of tasks and for a greater variety of purposes.

What strategies do the learners have for organizing and applying content knowledge?

Before we can use what we know about a skill, we have to have ways to organize all those discrete bits of skill-related infor-

We also need to understand, if possible, the personal challenges that contribute to the level of risk.

As learners develop more strategies, their understanding increases and becomes more complex; they can regularly recognize patterns, some simple and some "higher order." They can recognize cause and effect relationships, for instance, and can join prior knowledge with new information to solve some problems. They begin to generalize, draw conclusions and predict outcomes in some cases.

mation that come into our brains in different ways and at different times. That way the information "bits" can eventually be retrieved in the right combinations or "chunks", at the right time, for the right purpose.

Can learners recognize relationships or connections?

Can learners create new relationships or connections?

These questions refer to strategies that overlap in the developmental process so we deal with them together. The strategies have to do with the growing ability to first see, then develop, new "patterns" of information. By "patterns" we mean connections or relationships between facts, facts and concepts, and/or prior knowledge and newly acquired facts, connections or relationships that are based on some bigger themes or concepts that tie the bits of information together.

At the low end of the continuum learners have very few such strategies and are limited to simple recall of previously-learned bits of information. Initial "pattern recognition" is evident later when learners can achieve some low-level understanding of meaning by explaining, interpreting, translating, summarizing, paraphrasing, restating, and/or using examples. As learners develop more strategies, their understanding increases and becomes more complex; they can regularly recognize patterns, some simple and some higher order. They can recognize cause and effect relationships, for instance, and can join prior knowledge with new information to solve some problems. They begin to generalize, draw conclusions and predict outcomes in some cases.

As they move toward the upper reaches of the continuum, learners begin to move beyond "pattern recognition" to "pattern creation." They move from accurate analysis (seeing the relationships between concepts and related details, between content and organizational structure — using strategies such as comparison/contrast, analogies, generalization, inference and prediction) to synthesis (organizing information in new ways and proposing alternate systems of knowledge — using high-order strategies such as abstraction, criticism and justification).

Can learners identify what information is important to the task/problem?

At the low end of the continuum, learners who do not have data/information organized around principles and concepts have a very difficult time deciding what information is relevant to solving a problem or completing a task. Further along, the strategies learners have for organizing information enable them to consciously retrieve important information for a clearly-defined purpose, then for multiple purposes, then for wide-ranging purposes and contexts.

Can learners understand when information or concepts apply?

This question refers to a learner's ability to decide which procedures, concepts or principles are applicable to which situation/task/problem — in other words, the conditions under which procedures or concepts are useful. At the low end of the continuum there is very little understanding that procedures or concepts are not universally applicable. Further along, learners develop a growing repertoire of strategies linked to specific situations. Eventually, learners are able to flexibly choose from among a range of appropriate strategies those that are most effective under the specific combination of circumstances repre-

sented by task and context.

EXAMPLE:

Your learners are mostly single moms involved in a "Welfare-to-Work" program; they are developing the EFF Skill "Convey Ideas in Writing" and are engaging in a series of tasks to do so in contexts that are meaningful to them.

Vocabulary and content knowledge: Perhaps the learners need to begin with relatively simple tasks, like making shopping lists before going to the grocery store so that they will use their limited funds more carefully. This task would appear at the lower end of the continuum as it requires a limited set of vocabulary words, basic content knowledge, and limited familiarity with writing rules and practices. Further along the continuum, tasks will require a larger store of vocabulary, more diverse content knowledge and broader familiarity with writing rules — a note to a child's teacher requesting a meeting, for instance. While this may not be highly complex, it nevertheless involves sentences, punctuation, coherence, etc. as well as attention to the needs of an external audience to whom you are conveying information. Still further on, a written description of one local child care program may require a good store of words, writing conventions, and knowledge of child care concerns. At the high end, a task such as writing a guide to local child care options would probably require use of previously unfamiliar and more technical vocabulary, considerable mastery of writing conventions, and significant content knowledge in the areas of child development, state licensing regulations, etc.

Relationships and connections: At the low end of the continuum, learners may be able to do no more than copy in writing the words that they need for a grocery list from a master list (or later, from a newspaper circular). A little further on, they may be able to write a simple note to a teacher after practicing doing so in class, but this activity still represents little "understanding" beyond recall. However, a task such as rewriting the contents of a brochure advertising a local child care program so that it is easier to read requires at least "low-level" understanding. That understanding is reflected in the ability to interpret, paraphrase and restate information in writing, and so belongs further along the continuum. As learners progress in skill development, they are able to see patterns and use strategies to express relationships. For instance, after rewriting several brochures, they are ready to write an essay in which they compare the programs that have produced the brochures — what do the programs have in common? how are they different? And high on the continuum, learners will be able not only to recognize patterns but to create new ones. To write a useful guide to child care options, their writing skills will allow them to summarize their own research and prior knowledge, critically analyze choices according to key points of interest to parents, and express their conclusions and recommendations as to the best options.

As learners progress in skill development, they are able to see patterns and use strategies to express relationships.

What information is important, and when?

At the low end of the developmental continuum, a learner might copy exactly a master grocery list or a "generic" note to a teacher, without realizing that the list can be tailored to individual needs at specific times, or that a note will be more effective if it shows awareness of a particular teacher's context and concerns. Even re-

"Performance" refers to the dimensions of skill development that move the focus of teaching and learning beyond "what we know" and "how we organize what we know" to "what we can do with what we know".

writing a brochure loses some impact if the rewrite doesn't edit out information that is not useful for the audience's purpose (e.g., trying to make a decision about which child care option to choose). As skill develops, the learner becomes more and more able to choose and communicate information based on key points of interest (the "right" foods for my new, healthy diet; two specific matters I want to discuss about my child's reading; adherence to state child care regulations) and the particular audience being addressed (myself; the Reading Resource Room teacher; single moms in search of quality and affordable child care).

4) Performance

(Dimensions: degree of independence; degree of fluency and flexibility with which one can perform)

How well can learners perform?

"Performance" refers to the dimensions of skill development that move the focus of teaching and learning beyond "what we know" and "how we organize what we know" to "what we can do with what we know". It is about what the use of an EFF skill looks like in practice.

How fluently can learners perform? How much effort is required?

In the early stage of skill development, learners have a difficult time using the skill — partly because of lack of knowledge, and partly because of lack of practice. To perform at all, learners constantly need to tap what we call "working memory" and therefore have little energy left to absorb and understand the information available to them. So, at the low end of the continuum, performance of an EFF skill will look slow, difficult, and requiring great effort on the part of the learner. As knowledge and experience grow, learners will be able to use the skill to perform some tasks with greater ease, while other more complex or unfamiliar tasks will still require noticeable effort. At the high end of the continuum, learners can use the skill effortlessly, "automatically," with a high degree of fluency , to do whatever they need to do. Performance that used to require working memory now seems "unconscious".

How consistently do the learners start and finish, getting to the desired outcome?

The slowness and difficulty in performance at the low end of the continuum is matched by inconsistency of performance. At this point, learners will make a lot of "errors", will produce little work, and will have a hard time finishing the task. Further along the continuum, learners begin to show greater consistency in use of the skill; they complete tasks more often and with fewer errors. At the high end, effective skill use is systematic, work is completed and errors are rare.

How well are barriers controlled or overcome?

"Barriers" here refer to immediate adverse conditions that get in the way of effectively using a skill to perform a task. Such barriers may differ in nature and degree depending on the task and context (is the room too noisy? do I need glasses? do I never find time to work at home? have I misplaced the instructions?), but the key question is if/how the learners act to address them. At the low end of the continuum, learners will be easily diverted from the task by such problems, will be defeated and give up. Further along in skill development, learners will start to more often strategize about how to overcome identified obstacles; at the high end, regu-

larly addressing and overcoming barriers becomes part of the learning process

EXAMPLE:

You are working on development of the EFF Skill "Use Mathematics in Problem-Solving and Communication". Your learners have decided that they want to plant a community vegetable garden so that they can learn work skills by starting a small business selling the vegetables. The range of increasingly complex math tasks involved in planning a garden may include basic computations, simple measurements, areas, perimeters, even drawing and using scaled blueprints.

At the early stages on the continuum, learners will need to be taught, and constantly reminded of, the math operations that they need to complete necessary planning activities (how much space do we have? what shape will the garden take? how many different plots can we put in? how many plants can be placed in each plot? etc.). They will work slowly and struggle to "get it right". They may have a difficult time with obstacles that get in their way (do we have the right measuring tools? how do we get them? One plant requires more space than another, so how do we plant them both in the same plot?). It may be easy to abandon their plans at this point if too many problems present themselves. But as skills and experience with the math increase, learners will need fewer reminders and less help with addressing barriers. At the high end of the continuum, their work is systematic and they get the garden planted according to a clear and successful plan — using math to achieve their goal.

How independently can the learners perform?

How much help is needed from others?

When we use "Independence" as a dimension of skill development, we are not suggesting that working alone is better or "smarter" than working in collaboration with others. However, one indicator of developing mastery has to do with how much assistance learners need in order to use a skill to perform a task. At the low end of the continuum, learners need substantial help from others in order to use the skill even in the most familiar and simple tasks. Then, as the skill develops, learners will still need help, but more often with tasks that are difficult or unfamiliar. At the high end, no assistance is needed; rather, learners at this level are ready to assist others.

How much initiative is shown in getting started?

At the lower end of the continuum, learners need a "push" to begin a task; as they develop greater skill, they will need less prompting and will often get started on their own. At the high end learners need no "push" to get started; in fact, they will often initiate new tasks on their own, identifying and pursuing new opportunities to learn.

How often do learners generate their own strategies to complete the task?

Once learners get started, how much and what kinds of help do they need to complete a task? At the low end of the continuum, learners need to be offered a great deal of structure, clarification and guidance. They need to be able to "copy" strategies and approaches that others have used. Further along the continuum, learners can sometimes come up with strategies on their own, without strong guidance; at other times they still need approaches to be imposed and guidance to be offered. At the

When we use "Independence" as a dimension of skill development, we are not suggesting that working alone is better or "smarter" than working in collaboration with others. However, one indicator of developing mastery has to do with how much assistance learners need in order to use a skill to perform a task.

In the classroom, teachers and learners have discovered the power of the EFF Content Framework to align skill development with learner goals, and to focus instruction both on what learners know and on what they can do with that knowledge.

high end, learners can invent their own strategies, adapt approaches from outside sources of information, and justify their choices of the most appropriate ways to complete the task. They don't need guidance but can offer guidance to others.

EXAMPLE:

You have heard several individual learners, at various times, complain about conditions at your agency ("I wish we had some space here to just hang out and relax"; "we need a lunch room"; "I'd like to have books that we can take home to read"). You want to find a way to turn "complaints" into constructive input, so you decide to focus on the EFF Standard "Advocate and Influence". You approach some of the students and introduce the idea of forming a Learner Leadership Group, and they agree.

At the low end of the continuum, learners have little or no experience with effective advocacy, so they will need a great deal of instruction, prompting and assistance from you in how to begin. They will need you to give them a highly structured strategy, for instance, for recruiting other learners to join them and for identifying the issues that they want to address as a group. They will need your active involvement in order to insure success at reaching even a relatively simple goal such as asking Board members of the agency to donate used books for a small lending library. As their skill development moves along the continuum (and as they gain experience — and success!), they will need less assistance and fewer instructions from you, though they may still want your help with more complex advocacy opportunities (getting permission to reconfigure current space, or raising funds to add on a new room!). At the high end of the continuum, learners will be so skilled in advocacy, and will need so little help, that they can assist other, new program participants in joining the group and learning the necessary skills.

CONCLUSION

The past five years have been an exciting time of national collaboration and innovation for the EFF initiative. Through a broad consensus-building process we have developed standards that accurately reflect what adults need to know and be able to do. Through an iterative field review process we have made sure that our standards focus on performance that is observable and measurable, and that they are specific enough to guide instruction and assessment. In the classroom, teachers and learners have discovered the power of the EFF Content Framework to align skill development with learner goals, and to focus instruction both on what learners know and on what they can do with that knowledge.

Our remaining tasks are to define multiple levels of performance for which the students should strive, and to develop an assessment framework for EFF to help us identify and develop accurate assessment tools to meet a range of assessment purposes. These tasks are critical next steps if our standards are not only to guide teaching and learning but also to frame accountability for results – for learners who need to know they have credentials that convey what they know and can do to the outside world, and for funders and policymakers who need to know that programs and systems are achieving desired results.

We have tried here to describe some of the key work that is under way in this next

phase of the EFF development process:

- imagining one, research-based Performance Continuum that stays true to the principles at the foundation of the EFF Content Standards, and that frames for teachers the "scope and sequence" of adult development as a movement of ALL adults — including our learners — from "novice" to "expert";
- engaging in a field development process aimed at building such a Performance Continuum for each of the 16 EFF Standards that will support identification of level descriptors representing real world benchmarks;
- offering a Framework that teachers who are using EFF can use now to focus assessment, planning and instruction on four theory-and-practice-based dimensions of adult skill performance.

We are deeply grateful to the many development partners whose efforts have brought us this far and are moving us forward. Hard work lies ahead, but we look forward to the opportunities and potential for real change that accompany it.

For more information on Equipped for the Future and its publications, contact 1-877-433-7627 or go to its website @ http://www.nifl.gov/eff.

Performance Framework for EFF Standards

In order to insure that adult learners can use the EFF skills to act flexibly, with a range of options and choices, to meet the goals in their lives, teachers and learners need to pay attention to the following aspects of learner performance:

What kinds of tasks can learners carry out?

1. How complex is the task?
2. How familiar are learners with the task?

In what contexts can learners perform?

1. How familiar are learners with the context?
2. In how many different situations can learners perform?
3. How much risk is involved in the situation? How high are the stakes?

What do learners know?

1. Do learners have vocabulary related to the skill? related to the subject area?
2. Do learners have content knowledge related to the skill? related to the subject area?
3. Do learners have strategies for organizing content knowledge?

How well can learners perform?

1. How fluently can learners perform?
   - *How much effort is required?*
   - *How consistently do learners start and finish, getting to the desired outcome?*
   - *How well are barriers controlled or overcome?*
2. How independently can learners perform?
   - *How much help is needed from others?*
   - *How much initiative is shown in getting started?*
   - *How often do learners generate their own strategies to complete tasks?*

Equipped for the future

Equipped for the Future is an initiative of the National Institute for Literacy.

Revised January 2000

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Observation Worksheet

NAME OF STUDENT _____ DATE _____

EFF STANDARD _____

What kinds of tasks can learners carry out?	In what contexts can learners perform?	What do learners know?	How well can learners perform?

Volume
12 • 44

Connecting the ESOL Framework to Actual Practice

Rosann was part of a statewide curriculum frameworks project in Massachusetts. Funded by the Department of Education and facilitated by the School for International Training in Vermont, this project involved connecting the Massachusetts Adult ESOL frameworks to practice. This is the account of Roseann's experience as part of that project. This article is adapted from the draft document "Engaging Learners and Practitioners with the Adult ESOL Frameworks." June 1999. Roseann worked at the Lawrence Adult Learning Center during this project.

by
Roseann Ritter

North Andover, MA

There were about 35 students in my two ESOL classes. We met five days a week for two hours each morning. My students represented a cross-section of learners ranging in age from 22 to 64 with diverse educational backgrounds. The majority of students were Hispanic with 2 Russian students, two Haitian students, one Chinese student, one Cambodian student and one Korean student. The classes were somewhat homogeneously grouped as a high beginner-low intermediate level. They were all highly motivated to learn the language, however, as adults trying to juggle family, work, school, and the many pressures involved in being immigrants. They had many obstacles to overcome.

The environment of our class was participatory, with the primary emphasis on oral communication and navigating systems. Some daily focus was also on reading and written communication. Oral communication was encouraged and fostered by guiding students into peer conversations and guided dialogues. There was a special emphasis on problem solving. My students responded particularly well when the dialogues had special meaning and relevancy to their lives. Because of the participatory nature of my classes, the learner-input project was very enjoyable and worthwhile.

The primary purpose of the learner input project was to investigate ways in which teachers could develop instructional materials and comprehensive units of study that would be relevant, meaningful and responsive to students' needs. The ultimate goal was to tailor our program to better provide our students with the language and survival skills necessary to function effectively and meet the challenges of everyday life in this country. As part of the DOE Learner Input Project, my specific purpose was to see if the expressed needs and goals of my students matched with those expressed in the Massachusetts ESOL Curriculum Frameworks.

My project involved eliciting student's feelings and ideas regarding what is important to them and what kinds of knowledge and skills they hope to gain from our program/my classroom. We did this in the form of a student-generated needs assessment.

Our project evolved into several stages. The initial stage involved the learners identifying situations in their everyday lives that presented the greatest problems and challenges to them in trying to com-

municate in English. The process began as a class discussion where students shared their experiences, their concerns, and problems that they had encountered. Several students willingly shared stories where their inability to communicate in English presented problems that left them frustrated and embarrassed. As they shared their stories, a common bond was established as they realized that they all had similar feelings of frustration and despair. As the students talked about the contexts where they had the most difficulty communicating, I wrote the situations on an easel pad.

After coming up with nine areas of concern, I passed out index cards numbered one to four and asked them to prioritize them by listing the most difficult situation first, the next second and so on. The results were:

1. Doctors and Illness
2. Communicating at Work
3. Police and Court
4. Talking on the Telephone
5. Credit
6. Children's School
7. Computers
8. Shopping
9. Banking

The following day the class separated into focus groups according to the context category that they had listed as their first priority. Those that felt they had problems with "Doctors and Illness" made up one group; "Police and Court" made up another, "Talking on the Telephone" and "Communicating at Work" another. Their task was to come up with specific problems that they had encountered in each category. These were examples from each context: "I can't explain my health problem to the doctor," "I have trouble when I have to go for a job interview," "I can't explain my problems to a lawyer," "When my boss explains my job responsibilities, sometimes I don't understand him and then I get into trouble."

Each team appointed a secretary to write down the group's ideas. As I circulated among the groups, I assisted where necessary to help clarify ideas. It was stressed that at this particular time the main goal was to elicit ideas; grammar and spelling were not issues to worry about. Students were allowed to express and write their ideas in their native language if that was the way they could express them most succinctly and if all members of the group shared a common native language. Other members of the group helped to translate so the secretary could write it in English. The grammar skill that we were learning in class at that particular time was 'superlatives'. Students were able to apply the skills that they had learned e.g., most difficult, hardest, most confusing, most embarrassing, worst etc. in a contextual way. Integrating grammar into these discussions was important because it gave them practice using grammar structures we covered in class together by practicing oral language. Many students needed to know that they were getting the "grammar" for which they always craved.

The groups were very engaged in the task. At the onset of the project, I explained to them that they were playing an important role in assisting teachers to plan lessons and identify content areas that were important and meaningful to students across the state and that there were other adult students engaged in the same pro-

Students shared many interesting stories that helped to give me further insight into the needs of my language learners.

cess. They took complete ownership of the project and expressed several times that they felt it was a very important endeavor.

When the groups completed their lists of "can't do"s, they dictated them to me and I wrote them on sheets of easel paper. I then asked, "Does everyone have difficulty with all of these things?" From that discussion we came up with varying degrees of difficulty. "That's easy for me, sometimes I can do that, it's a big problem," etc.

The next phase was to convert those "can't do"s to "can do"s. This was a difficult but necessary step to facilitate dealing with the students' varying degrees of difficulty with the items they came up with. It was also putting their thoughts in a "positive" rather than "negative" context, emphasizing not only what they "*don't* know" and "*can't* do" but also what they "*do* know and "*can* do". Statements like, "When my boss gives me new job responsibilities, I don't understand what he is saying and I sometimes get into trouble," were changed to, "I understand what I need to do when my boss gives me a new job responsibility."

The students again worked in their focus groups to convert their can't do's. Each group came up with a new list of can do statements that they dictated to me and I wrote them on the easel pad. Their enthusiasm was truly exciting and their productivity was amazing! They were totally engaged in every step of the process. After our lists were compiled, we were then ready to transfer our work to produce a needs assessment chart (see pages???)

Part of our program was to integrate technology into what we were teaching in class. This was a perfect opportunity to do this. Since learning computer skills was very important to most students, they took this on with enthusiasm.

This was the last step in finalizing our needs assessment tool. Using the computer in my classroom I taught students how to produce a table using Microsoft Word and how to insert symbols into a document. Students were eager to go to the computer lab the following week to produce their tables. Every student in both classes produced a table, inserted their "can do" list, and very ingeniously selected symbols to insert in their charts. Four needs assessment surveys were developed based on what students felt were the four highest priority areas: going to the doctor, police and court, talking on the telephone, and workplace issues.

We ran off copies of each of the four completed surveys to be administered to most of the day and some of the night ESOL students in our center. Two of my students expressed willingness to administer the survey to the lowest levels where some translation would be necessary. They accompanied me when I administered the survey and translated the items from English to Spanish. One of my Russian students translated from English to Russian. Another student took the results home and tallied every item to produce final figures for the survey. We surveyed about 100 students in all four categories.

Students shared many interesting stories that helped to give me further insight into the needs of my language learners. Although many of the needs they expressed are the usual concerns that students have, there were some new ideas that surfaced through discussion. One of the areas that generated the most lengthy and interesting discussions was the area of law enforcement and our legal system. Students' concerns about these systems really got me

thinking about what my role is, or should be in assisting them to navigate the legal system. It became apparent to me that if this issue concerns my students to the degree that they expressed in our discussion groups, it is an area that needs to be further explored. Is it our responsibility to educate our adult students about the basic laws of this country? Should we teach strategies that will assist our students in advocating for themselves within the law enforcement system? Where do you draw the line in encouraging students to take risks and advocate for themselves?

This Learner Input Project was a valuable experience for my students and me. It enabled me to take a closer look at my teaching, and my role as a teacher and to formulate some new ideas for future planning.

As a result of this project, I am currently facilitating a team of teachers working on developing comprehensive units based on the results of the survey's findings. Using the needs expressed in the student-generated survey we will develop units of study that will be closely tied to the Curriculum Frameworks and will address the expressed needs of our students. We have developed several lesson plans on "Doctors and Illness." We will then begin a second unit on 'Police and Courts." Hopefully, this will continue to be an ongoing process where increasing numbers of learners and practitioners will participate in planning meaningful and relevant curriculum for our center.

☑

Where do you draw the line in encouraging students to take risks and advocate for themselves?

DOCTORS AND ILLNESS	I can do this; No problem.	I can do this most of the time.	This is Difficult for me. Sometimes I Can do this.	This is very difficult for me to do.	It's impossible. I can't do this. No way!
1. I can explain my health problems to the doctor.					
2. When my child is sick, I can tell the doctor about my child's problem					
3 I can answer all of the doctor's questions.					
4. . I can understand when the doctor speaks to me about my health.					
5. I can name every part of my body.					
6. I can understand medical language.					
7. I can fill out medical information forms at the doctor's office and at the hospital.					
8. I can go to the pharmacy to get a prescription.					
9. I can read and understand directions on the prescription container.					
10. I can read a thermometer.					
11. I can understand what "normal" temperature is.					

DOCTORS AND ILLNESS	I can do this; No problem.	I can do this most of the time.	This is Difficult for me. Sometimes I Can do this.	This is very difficult for Me to do.	It's impossible. I can't do this. No way!
12. I can understand what "normal" is for blood pressure and cholesterol.					
13. I can make an appointment to see the doctor.					
14. I can telephone for an ambulance.					
15. I can drive to the nearest hospital.					
16. I understand when to go to the doctor and when to go to the hospital.					
17. I understand where the special medical clinics are in my city					

COURTS & POLICE	I can do this; no problem.	I can do this most of the time.	This is difficult for me. Sometimes I can do this.	This is very difficult for me to do.	It's impossible. I can't do this.
I can ask a policeman for directions.					
I can understand the directions he gives me.					
I know what to do when I get a parking ticket.					
I can call the police to report an accident.					
I can explain to the police what happened in the accident.					
I can go to the police station to make a report.					
I can read and understand a police report.					
I can communicate with a lawyer.					
I can go to court and explain to the judge what happened.					
I can understand most American Laws.					
I can understand legal documents (summons, restraining orders, eviction notices etc.)					

COURTS & POLICE	I can do this; no problem.	I can do this most of the time.	This is difficult for me. Sometimes I can do this.	This is very difficult for me to do.	It's impossible. I can't do this.
I understand the American court system (District Court, Criminal Court, Juvenile Court, Supreme Court etc.)					
I can be a juror.					
I understand how to appeal a decision.					

TELEPHONE	I can do this; no problem.	I can do this most of the time.	This is difficult for me. Sometimes I can do this.	This is very difficult for me to do.	It's impossible. I can't do this.
I can understand when someone speaks to me in English on the telephone.					
I feel comfortable answering the telephone.					
I can respond in English when someone calls me on the phone.					
I can look up numbers in the telephone book.					
I can use the yellow pages.					
I can call the child-care center and speak English to the caretakers.					
I can call in sick at the Adult Learning Center.					
I can call into work and explain why I can't come to work.					
I can call my doctor's office to make an appointment.					
I can call 911 in an emergency.					

TELEPHONE	I can do this no problem.	I can do this most of the time.	This is difficult for me. Sometimes I can do this	This is very difficult for me to do.	It's impossible. I can't do this. No Way!
I can make long distance phone calls					
I can call information to find out a number					
I can read and understand all the charges on my telephone bill					
I can call 911 in an emergency					

WORK	I can do this; No problem.	I can do this most of the time.	This is Difficult for me. Sometimes I can do this.	This is very difficult for me to do.	It's impossible. I can't do this. No way!
1. I can fill out a job application.					
2. I can write a resume.					
3. I can interview for a job.					
4. I can communicate with my American co-workers.					
5. I understand my job responsibilities.					
6. I can explain my job to others.					
7. I feel comfortable when my boss gives me a new job to do.					
8. I can read directions and work orders.					
9. I can speak to customers and I can understand when they speak to me.					
10. I can speak English well enough to get a promotion.					
11. I can teach my job to a new employee.					

	I can do this; No problem.	I can do this most of the time.	This is Difficult for me. Sometimes I can do this.	This is very difficult for me to do.	It's impossible. I can't do this. No way!
12. I can ask my boss for a raise.					
13. I can call in sick.					
14. I can read and understand signs at work.					
15. I know all about my company.					

Volume
12 • 56

To TABE or Not to TABE: One Agency's Options

by
Bernie Driscoll

Taunton Adult
Literacy Center
Taunton, MA

The Taunton Adult Literacy Center offers several programs. Our classes consist of two ABE, two ESOL, a Pre-GED class and a GED class. We hold classes two or three times a week from 9-12 in the morning. Our student ratio is 60% women and 40% men. Some of the students are employed and others are not. Many of the students work in the home. The ages of the students range from 18-65.

The goal of our program is to meet the needs of the individual student. People participate in our program for various reasons. Some come to improve their language skills; others seek better employment or to continue their education. We try to help students achieve their personal goals.

As the assessment person, I talk with the student at intake and find out his or her individual reason for attending our program. I try to find out a little about their past educational experience. Once I have gotten a feel for where they may be academically, I decide which test to give them. We have different tools and tests that we use to assess students depending on their abilities.

We use the TABE test when a student attended school for several years. For many students who come into our program the TABE test is very intimidating, not only the content but the test itself. If we see that a student is very nervous then we start them with our one page in-house assessment. The students see one page instead of many pages and the undertaking does not seem so overwhelming.

We then feel we are able to get a better understanding of the person's ability. The test has basically the same subjects as the TABE: whole numbers, computation and concepts, geometry and algebra. The main difference is it only has 25-40 questions, not 90 like the TABE.

Our goal is to place students in appropriate levels, but also to have them walk out of the assessment protocol with a positive attitude about school. Many of our students have had negative prior experiences in school. They began to believe that they were incapable of doing math. We often hear: 'I can't do that.' In order for these students to be successful in their educational endeavors, we must have them overcome the belief that they cannot do it.

Teachers also take part in the assessment process. Once the students are placed in the class the teachers assess them on a daily basis through class participation, classroom observation, formal testing, informal testing, informal testing projects feedback between the student and teacher, and in some cases working with math games on the computers.

Twice a year teachers in the higher level classes use the TABE test to compare the scores the students had at the start of the class to that of the midterm and the final. The majority of the students are comfortable with testing at this point and are anxious to see the progress they have made.

Testing in the lower levels is not as structured. The teacher might opt to do a formal test at the end depending on the in-

dividual student. Many times the teacher looks at the student's portfolio and assesses using what they have collected over a period of time. If a student is to move on to a higher level we need scores documented; therefore formal testing is done.

After many years of actual testing and evaluating students we believe our new system works well. Enrollments high and retention is impressive. Very few students have dropped out in the last year. We hope that some of these assessment ideas will be helpful to your program.

☑

(chart follows)

Taunton Math Pre-Test

Write the value of the underlined digit.

1. 612,4<u>8</u>0 _____ 2. <u>3</u>24 _____

3. 1<u>5</u>,687 _____ 4. 99<u>9</u> _____

Round to the place value named.

5. 785 to the nearest ten 6. 15,642 to the nearest thousand

ADD.

7. 454 + 27 + 1,078 = _____

8. 83,225 + 7,453 + 54 = _____

SUBTRACT.

9. 865 − 360 10. 756 − 638 11. 90,900 − 78,221

MULTIPLY. 12. 58 X 27 = 13. 94 x 63 =

DIVIDE. 14. $5\overline{)2{,}430}$ 15. $23\overline{)2{,}254}$

SOLVE THE FOLLOWING PROBLEMS.

16. 2 + 5(3) = 17. 1 + 8(3) =

18. 5(4+3) = 19. 22 + 3(8-5) =

20. BCC has an intramural soccer league. A total of 440 students sign up for soccer. If each team has 22 players, how many teams will there be?

ROUND EACH NUMBER TO THE PLACE VALUE NAMED.

21. 0.25 (nearest tenth) _____ 22. 9.376 (nearest whole number)_____

23. 0.2136 (nearest thousandth) _____ 24. 8.607 (nearest hundredth) _____

ADD OR SUBTRACT.

25. 82.152 + .029 = 26. 87.31 - 29.8 =

MUTIPLY OR DIVIDE.

27. 36 X .25 = _____ 28. $0.84\overline{)21}$

SOLVE THE FOLLOWING PROBLEM.

29. Mr. Amaral travels for three days. He spends $402.77, $398.89, and $228.24. How much did he spend?

REDUCE EACH FRACTION TO LOWEST TERMS.

30. $\frac{3}{9}$ 31. $\frac{24}{32}$

CHANGE EACH MIXED NUMBER TO AN IMPROPER FRACTION.

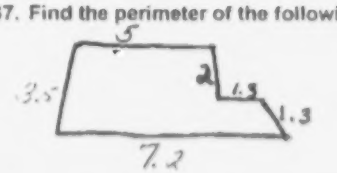
32. $3\frac{1}{3}$ 33. $1\frac{7}{10}$

SOLVE THE FOLLOWING.

34. $\frac{2}{3} \times \frac{4}{7} =$ 35. $\frac{5}{6} - \frac{2}{3} =$

36. It takes Ellen $\frac{5}{8}$ of an hour to knit the back of a child's sweater, $\frac{3}{8}$ of an hour to knit the front, and $1\frac{1}{2}$ hours to assemble it. How long does it take Ellen to complete one Child's sweater?

37. Find the perimeter of the following figure.



38. SOLVE.

S = P- 0.25P
If S = $30, find P

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Volume
12 • 60

Learning and Change:
A Phase Two North Carolina ESOL Framework Inquiry Project

by
Beth Brockman

Durham, NC

In the spring of 1999 I participated in Literacy South's Phase Two of the North Carolina ESOL Curriculum Framework Inquiry Project. The purpose of this project was to discuss and analyze the draft form of the North Carolina ESOL Curriculum Framework, developed in a year long process by a group of 15 adult ESOL practitioners.

Following our initial meeting, I focused my part of the inquiry project on one of the eight guiding principles developed by Phase One participants that asserted that language learning is a change process, both cognitive and affective. Further, that ESOL learners make non-language gains such as increased self-confidence and self-esteem. I specifically wanted to explore the non-language gains learners make in the ESOL classroom. I spent two months reading any literature I could get my hands on regarding the subject, talking to my colleagues about the changes they saw in their learners, and conducting an inquiry with my ESOL learners. In this article I share the findings of my inquiry and what I see as some implications for ESOL practitioners.

MY INQUIRY

I decided to ask the ESOL learners in my intermediate level class at Wake Technical Community College what changes they have experienced while studying English. I designed a survey entitled, "Are you changing?" based on a tool from East End Literacy (Hemmindinger, 1988). I taught this class on Monday and Wednesday evenings, from 6:30 to 9:30. Students also attended class on Tuesday and Thursday, same time, but with a different teacher.

I began class by telling the learners I was part of a research project and that I was interested in finding out the kinds of changes students had made in the process of learning English other than gains in language ability. We brainstormed a list of non-language gains students had made, which I wrote on the board. Then I gave out the assessment tool, "Are you changing?" and briefly went through it to make sure the students understood all the vocabulary. The survey also included the request, "If you can, draw a picture of how you looked when you first started to speak English and how you look now when you speak English." The students then completed the survey individually. Finally, students got together with a partner and each person shared what she or he had written.

The list of non-language outcomes the students brainstormed consisted of:

- More confidence to go shopping
- Ability to go out and make friends
- Confidence to express feelings
- Improved relationships--found love [!]
- Come to class regularly, even every day
- Travel more
- Changed appearance, clothing
- Better understanding of formal situations

- Able to give help to family
- Got driver's license.

We discussed the changes as we brainstormed this list. Sometimes I asked clarifying questions. At other times I asked students to expound on what they had said, or to give an example.

All the students agreed that they had changed. They also agreed that the amount of time they had spent in the U.S. and studying English influenced the changes they had made in their lives. They felt, generally, that they had made significant language gains after they had come to the U.S. and had studied in class.

The answers on the survey varied. All the students listed language as well as non-language gains they had made in the process of learning English. The categories of non-language outcomes the students' responses fell into were: Confidence, Learning Skills, Cultural Awareness, Knowledge of Social Institutions, Access and Entry into Further Study, and Support in the Learning Environment.

IMPLICATIONS FOR ESOL EDUCATORS

I was struck by three things in the survey results. First, I noticed that students had difficulty separating non-language and language outcomes. Second, I was amazed at the level of excitement students exhibited in talking about how they had changed. Last, it was interesting to me that so many students were eager to draw a picture to show how they had changed.

Of course it is understandable that students have difficulty separating language and non-language outcomes. It is difficult to talk about change without describing it holistically. The recommendations here for ESOL educators are twofold, I believe. First, non-language outcomes should be included in our objectives, right alongside our objectives for gains in language proficiency. Second, the methods used in our classroom should promote non-language, as well as language gains.

Australia's Adult Migrant English Program (AMEP) shows its high regard for non-language outcomes in English language and literacy programs by incorporating them within a Certificate in Spoken and Written English Competencies (Jackson, 1994). "By doing this, full recognition is also given to the fact that non-language outcomes are amenable to... expression... within a competency-based training" (p. 19). Non-language gains are not merely by-products; they are consciously addressed in the curriculum. AMEP recognizes that language and non-language outcomes are intertwined.

An Australian study lists numerous achievements by incorporating non-language outcomes as an integral part of the development of language and literacy competencies (Jackson, 1994):

- It makes these outcomes apparent within the framework of other educational accomplishments.
- It acknowledges the skills development in this area as part of an ongoing educational process.
- It encourages closer examination of the content of these outcomes.
- It allows similar continuity of development in this area of skill as in others.
- It fully appreciates the value of these outcomes to the proposed education both within and outside the context of the classroom.
- It promotes the development of teaching

Teachers of ESOL students who want to portray a more authentic picture of their students should foster non-language outcomes in their students by creating assessment tools that give opportunities for students to talk about and reflect on the changes they are going through while studying English.

practices specifically targeting these outcomes.

This leads very well into the second recommendation I have for ESOL educators: use methods in our classroom that promote non-language, as well as language gains. I found that the Australian study seemed to place great emphasis on the methods used in an ESOL classroom. Specifically, the study mentioned that applying the principles of adult learning increased students' confidence and self-esteem (Jackson, 1994).

Susan Imel lists the following adult learning principles to guide our methods in class:

- Involve learners in planning and implementing learning activities;
- Draw upon learners' experiences as a resource;
- Establish a climate that encourages and supports learners and enhances self-esteem;
- Encourage self-direction in learners;
- Promote a spirit of collaboration in the classroom; and
- Use small groups to encourage cooperation and promote teamwork (Rosen, 1999).

I would like to return to my surprise at the level of excitement students exhibited in talking about how they had changed and that so many students were eager to draw a picture to show how they had changed. I believe this has implications specifically in the area of assessment. If students are so eager to talk about and draw the changes they are making while learning English, that tells me this is something worthy of being assessed!

I believe there is a lack of assessment tools that consider non-language outcomes. Certainly standardized measures fail to assess these gains. Thus, it is the responsibility of educators, both instructors and administrators, to come up with tools that assess non-language outcomes. About 88 percent of the teachers interviewed for the research in the Adult Migrant English program in Australia "thought that achievements in the non-language outcome area deserved formal recognition and should be recorded as part of an adequate student profile" (Jackson, 1994, p. 8).

Teachers of ESOL students who want to portray a more authentic picture of their students should foster non-language outcomes in their students by creating assessment tools that give opportunities for students to talk about and reflect on the changes they are going through while studying English. Teachers should encourage students to write about their own experiences of change. For low-level literacy students, a teacher could use the Language Experience Approach (LEA). There are many variations of the LEA and it can easily be adapted to most classroom situations.

For students with higher levels of literacy, teachers can give them a variety of ways to share their stories through writing. Students can write in journals or dialogue journals, compose poetry, develop a student newsletter, and even publish a class newspaper or book. Students who publish their writings, either within or beyond the classroom, experience many benefits. They discover that the realities of their own lives are worth thinking about, getting down on paper, and sharing with other people (Peyton, 1993). These stories can be used to

help students think about the changes they are experiencing, and give them an avenue for expressing themselves.

Seeing the students excited about expressing themselves through drawing emphasized to me the importance of acknowledging a variety of ways of knowing and communicating (Schneider & Clarke, 1993). Thus, assessment should rely on an assortment of tools to reflect students' knowing and allow them different ways to express their outcomes. Certainly one assessment tool will not capture it all.

CONCLUSION

Participating in Phase Two of the ESOL Curriculum Framework Inquiry Project was a great learning experience for me. At the end of my project, I concluded that change is an important part of a healthy system. It is an essential and natural part of living, and plays a meaningful role in growth and evolution. Change and continued creation signal new ways of maintaining order and structure. Thus, it is natural to expect ESOL learners in our classrooms to experience all kinds of changes, including those that fall into the realm of non-language outcomes. Instead of merely anticipating these changes, let's do what we can to encourage them by including non-language outcomes in our objectives, addressing them in our classrooms, and designing assessment tools that capture these gains..

REFERENCES

Hemmendinger, A. (1988). *A tool kit: Self evaluation exercises for students and literacy workers*. Ontario, Canada: East End Literacy.

Jackson, E. (1994). *Non-language outcomes in the adult migrant English program*. Sydney, Australia: The National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.

Peyton, J. K. (1993). Listening to students' voices: Publishing students' writing for other students to read. In J. Crandall & J. K. Peyton (Eds.), *Approaches to adult ESL literacy instruction* (pp. 59-73). Washington, DC: Center for Applied Linguistics.

Rosen, D. J. (1999). NLA Discussion: The need to improve practice. Posting to NLA list-serve, 13 February 1999.

Schneider, M, & Clarke, M. (1993). *Dimensions of change: An authentic assessment guidebook*. Durham, NC: Peppercorn Press.

Used by permission of the author.

Are you changing?

Are you getting more confident?

★ Are there things that you do now that you did not do before coming to English class? What are they?

EXAMPLE: *I go out by myself more often.*

★ How often did you come to English class when you first started studying English? Please explain.

★ How often do you come to class now? Please explain.

★ Do you feel less shy with your teacher now? Please explain.

★ Do you feel more comfortable participating in class? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

★ **When you first came to English class, did you speak English outside class?**

❒ Yes ❒ No

If yes, how often? Where? Describe your experiences.

_____

_____

_____

_____

★ Do you speak English more in your every day life now than you did before you started studying English in class? Please explain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

★ Are you more comfortable speaking English with people outside class? Please explain. If you can write an example, please do.

_____

_____

_____

_____

more

★ Are there any other changes you have made since you started studying English in class? What are they?

_____

_____

_____

_____

★ If you can, draw a picture of how you looked when you first started to speak English and how you look now when you speak English.

Adapted from Hemmendinger, A. (1988). A tool kit: Self evaluation exercises for students and literacy workers. *Ontario, Canada: East End Literacy.*